

Message Text

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ORIGIN NEA-10

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DRAFTED BY NEA/P:REUNDELAND:RGH
APPROVED BY NEA/P:GFSHERMAN
S/PRS - MR. CARTER (INFO)
H - MR. FLATEN (INFO)
SSM - MR. MC ANDREW
NEA/IAI - MR. SMITH
NEA/ARN - MR. DRAPER
NEA/EGY - MR. NEWBERRY
NEA/ARP - MR. TWINAM

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TO AMEMBASSY AMMAN IMMEDIATE
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AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS IMMEDIATE
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY JIDDA IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV IMMEDIATE
USCINCEUR
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CINCEUR FOR POLAD, EL AVIV FOR PAO, DELIVER BY 9 A.M.

E.O. 11652: N/A

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TAGS: PFOR

SUBJECT: DEPARTMENT PRESS BRIEFING - JANUARY 13

FOR YOUR INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE FOLLOWING ARE EXCERPTS
FROM DEPARTMENT PRESS BRIEFING FOR JANUARY 13, 1978.
FYI ONLY, SPOKESMAN TODAY WAS JOHN TRATTNER.

Q. THERE'S A REPORT THAT PRESIDENT SADAT HAS TOLD AN INTERVIEWER THE ISRAELI FORMULATION ON THE QUESTION OF THE PALESTINIANS IS ACCEPTABLE TO HIM AS LONG AS IT LEADS TO SELF-DETERMINATION DOWN THE ROAD. HAVE YOU HEARD TFROM HIM?

A. NEVER. NO, AND IN ANY CASE, BEING AS CLOSE AS WE ARE TO THE JERUSALEM TALKS, I WOULD REALLY PREFER NOT TO TRY TO GET INTO IT. WE'VE SEEN THAT INTERVIEW, WE'VE READ IT; IT'S INTERESTING. BUT I JUST DON'T HAVE ANYTHING TO TELL YOU ABOUT IT.

Q. DO YOU HAVE ANY COMMENT ON THE NEW YORK TIMES REPORT ABOUT TWO PALESTINIANS BEING BEATEN BADLY BY THE ISRAELI AUTHORITIES --

A. NO, I DON'T HAVE ANY CONFIRMATION. I'VE SEEN THE REPORTS. WE HAVE ASKED OUR EMBASSY THERE TO INFORM US ABOUT IT IF THEY CAN. I DON'T HAVE ANYTHING FOR YOU ON IT

NOW.

Q. ANYTHING ON THE SECRETARY'S TRAVEL PLANS IN CONNECTION WITH THE JERUSALEM TALKS?

A. STILL NOTHING. NO.
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Q. SEVERAL DAYS?

A. SEVERAL DAYS.

Q. AND COMING BACK HERE BY THURSDAY?

A. YES.

Q. I WOULD LIKE THE RECORD TO SHOW THAT I'VE BEEN ASKING FOR A WEEK HERE ABOUT WHAT IT WAS THAT THE UNITED STATES DECIDED TO DO AS A RESULT OF THE CONVERSATIONS THE PRESIDENT HAD IN IRAN AND IN UDI ARABIA AND THERE REALLY HAVE BEEN NO ANSWERS FORTHCOMING TO THAT. THE PEOPLE IN THE DEPARTMENT HAVE SEEMED TO BE PUZZLED ABOUT WHAT IT WAS THAT WAS DECIDED THERE, IF ANYTHING.

A. WITH RESPECT TO THE HORN?

Q. YES, WITH RESPECT TO THE HORN OF AFRICA.

A. YES. I THINK WE POSTED OR TRIED TO POST SOMETHING, BUT

I CAN SAY HERE THAT OBVIOUSLY WE'RE NOT GOING TO GO INTO THE DETAILS OF THE PRESIDENT'S CONVERSATIONS WITH THOSE LEADERS OF THOSE COUNTRIES.

MY UNDERSTANDING IS THAT THE HORN WAS ONE OF SEVERAL SUBJECTS IN THE PRESIDENT'S CONVERSATIONS WITH, FOR EXAMPLE, THE SHAH AND THE SAUDI LEADERS BUT NOT A MAJOR SUBJECT OF THOSE CONVERSATIONS.

NOW, IT'S NO SECRET THAT THE IRANIANS AND THE SAUDIS ARE VERY CONCERNED AT THE EXTENT OF SOVIET INVOLVEMENT IN ETHIOPIA, AS ARE WE, AND WE --

Q. WAS IRAN ONE OF THE COUNTRIES THAT WAS OVERFLOWN BY UNCLASSIFIED

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THE SOVIET AIRLIFT?

A. IS IRAN ONE OF THE COUNTRIES WITH WHOM WE DISCUSSED --?

Q. NO. THAT WAS OVERFLOWN BY THE SOVIET PLANES.

A. THE ANSWER TO THAT IS, AS YOU KNOW, THAT I AM NOT ABLE TO GET INTO COUNTRIES THAT ARE OVERFLOWN.

Q. WHY NOT?

A. WELL, BECAUSE I'M NOT.

Q. THERE'S A REAL PROSPECT HERE THAT SOME OF OUR ALLIES ARE ALLOWING THEIR AIRSPACE TO BE USED BY SOVIET PLANES.

A. WELL, THAT IS AN OBSERVATION TO WHICH I REALLY DON'T HAVE A RESPONSE I CAN GIVE YOU FROM HERE.

Q. HAVE YOU FINISHED YOUR STATEMENT YET?

A. NO, I HAVE NOT FINISHED MY STATEMENT OR AN ANSWER TO YOUR QUESTION.

WE HAVE ALREADY AND ARE CONTINUING OUR EFFORTS TO ENCOURAGE BOTH SIDES IN THE OGADEN CONFLICT TO RESOLVE THEIR DIFFERENCES BY NEGOTIATION -- WHICH IS, OF COURSE, WHAT I'VE BEEN SAYING HERE ALREADY -- AND WE HAVE MADE IT CLEAR THAT WE OPPOSE THE CONTINUED SUPPLY OF ARMS TO THE AREA.

NOW, MORE TO THE POINT WHEN WE'RE TALKING ABOUT THE SAUDIS AND THE IRANIANS, I WOULD SAY THAT WE WILL NEITHER UNCLASSIFIED

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SUPPLY ARMS TO EITHER OF THE CONTENDING PARTIES IN THE HORN OURSELVES NOR WILL WE AUTHORIZE THE TRANSFER BY OTHERS OF U.S.-ORIGIN ARMS.

Q. WHAT DOES "THE TRANSFER BY OTHERS" MEAN? MAY I QUESTION THE WORDING OF THAT A MINUTE? WHAT DOES "TRANSFER BY OTHERS" MEAN? DOES THAT MEAN TRANSFERRING THEM TO THE USE AND OWNERSHIP AND POSSESSION OF THE SOMALIAN ARMED FORCES OR DOES THAT STATEMENT ALSO COVER FOREIGN EXPEDITIONARY FORCES EQUIPPED WITH AMERICAN ARMS GOING IN TO PARTICIPATE IN THE ACTION?

A. I WOULD ASSUME THAT IT COVERS BOTH OF THOSE CUES.

Q. IT DOES COVER. IN OTHER WORDS, A COUNTRY LIKE IRAN WOULD NOT BE FREE TO SEND AN EXPEDITIONARY FORCE IN THERE EQUIPPED WITH AMERICAN-SUPPLIED WEAPONS.

A. WELL, I DON'T WANT TO PREJUDGE WHAT OUR POSITION ON THAT WOULD BE. I COULD CERTAINLY GUESS. BUT I THINK IT WOULD COVER BOTH OF THOSE.

I'LL CHECK THAT TECHNICALLY TO BE SURE I'M CORRECT ON IT -- CERTAINLY IN THE FIRST CASE, SINCE YOU MENTIONED IT, THE "WOULD BE" STANDS.

Q. THE FIRST CASE I UNDERSTAND. THE SECOND CASE I WANT TO FIND OUT ABOUT.

Q. CAN YOU RESPOND TO THE QUESTION OF WHETHER THERE HAVE BEEN ANY SHIPMENTS OF ARMS -- OF U.S. ARMS -- BY ANY OF THE PARTIES INTO THE AREA?

A. WELL, I DON'T THINK THERE HAVE BEEN.

Q. THERE HAVE BEEN REPORTS -- PUBLISHED REPORTS -- THAT
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THEY HAVE BEEN ISSUED ARMS.

A. I KNOW THERE HAVE BEEN REPORTS. I'VE ASKED THE QUESTION. I'M NOT TOLD THAT THERE HAVE BEEN ANY THAT WE ARE AWARE OF.

Q. ON SAUDI ARABIA AND THE MIDDLE EAST?

Q. DID SAUDI ARABIA AND IRAN ASK FOR AUTHORITY TO TRANSFER WEAPONS TO SOMALIA?

A. I THINK I'M GOING TO HAVE TO DODGE THAT ONE BY SAYING THAT I CANNOT GET INTO THE DETAILS OF THE CONVERSATIONS.

Q. JOHN, WHAT DID THE U.S. DEPARTMENT DO, OR WHAT'S IT DOING AT THIS TIME, ABOUT THE ARREST OF THE AMERICAN STUDENT VISITING ISRAEL? HIS NAME, I BELIEVE, IS SAMY ESMAIL.

A. LET'S SEE WHAT I HAVE ON THAT, SEMANN. HAVE WE ADDRESSED THAT FROM UP HERE? I'M NOT SURE WE HAVE. YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT A GENTLEMAN NAMED SAMY ESMAIL?

Q. YES.

A. I CAN GIVE YOU THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION I WAS GIVEN A DAY OR SO AGO. HE WAS ARRESTED ON DECEMBER 21ST AT THE AIRPORT AT TEL-AVIV. THE EMBASSY -- OUR EMBASSY -- WAS INFORMED OF HIS ARREST TWO DAYS LATER. CONSULAR ACCESS TO HIM WAS GRANTED TWO DAYS AFTER THAT. THE CHARGE IS THAT HE'S BEING DETAINED ON SUSPICION THAT HE CAME TO ISRAEL TO ENGAGE IN TERRORIST ACTIVITIES ON BEHALF OF UNCLASSIFIED

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PALESTINIAN ORGANIZATIONS; BUT FORMAL CHARGES HAVE NOT YET BEEN FILED, AND THAT WAS AS OF A COUPLE OF DAYS AGO. THERE HAD BEEN TWO PRELIMINARY HEARINGS SO FAR -- ONE ON JANUARY 6TH. AT THAT ONE THE MAGISTRATE AUTHORIZED AN ADDITIONAL 15 DAYS OF DETENTION FOR FURTHER INVESTIGATIONS. I DON'T KNOW -- I'M NOT INFORMED AS TO THE DATE OF THE OTHER HEARING. AND THAT'S ABOUT ALL I HAVE.

Q. WELL, IS THE U.S. DEPARTMENT DOING ANYTHING ABOUT THAT? IS IT GOING TO HELP HIM OR AID HIM?

A. WELL, I SAY WE HAVE CONSULAR ACCESS TO HIM AND WE ARE TRYING TO HELP HIM THE WAY WE WOULD HELP ANY OTHER PERSON IN THE SAME SITUATION. YES.

Q. DO YOU HAVE ANY MORE INFORMATION ON THE NATURE OF THE CHARGES?

A. ONLY WHAT I GAVE YOU.

CHRISTOPHER

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